



# South Carolina River News



Summer 2000

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## Our Rivers and Our Children

*J. Ellis Farr, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources*

South Carolina's rivers are one of our most valued natural resource. They serve us by supplying good drinking water for our communities and assimilate the waste these communities generate. They give us areas for recreation, and create for us areas of beauty and serenity. In recent years, the rivers of South Carolina have also played an integral role in the development of another of our states most prized resources...our children.

Rivers are being used more and more as an education tool to teach children about the environment. The goal is to create good stewards of our natural world. To accomplish this, state agencies such as DNR, PRT and DHEC and local government entities such as county Soil and Water Conservation Districts reach out to children through programs that are designed to raise their awareness of the importance of our river resources.

Some programs work directly with children in and out of the classroom demonstrating

how what they have learned in the class is put to use managing the states natural resources. Others like the South Carolina Beach Sweep/River Sweep, Adopt-a-Landing, and Water Watch Programs allow children to learn first hand about the problem over-use and pollu-



*Boy Scouts clean Bundrick Island on Lake Murray as part of Beach Sweep/River Sweep 2000*

tion create on our rivers. They also learn ways in which they can help correct the problem, or even better, prevent the problem from occurring in the first place.

Programs such as Project WET® train teachers to integrate hands-on, inquiry-based water-related activities which promote awareness, appreciation, knowledge and steward-

ship of water resources into existing curricula. Students can then connect what they're learning in the classroom to something that's going on around them, thus they learn better. This method of teaching and learning helps generate a sense of community among our younger citizens, which they will hopefully carry forward into adulthood.

Why do make such an effort to educate our children about South Carolina's rivers? Everyone bears responsibility for the health of a watershed and the water systems (rivers, lakes, wetlands, etc.) within a drainage basin. Individual actions, both negative and positive, add up. Understanding a river's water quality and quantity involves investigating the condition of the contributing watershed. If the watershed is polluted, the river will likely be polluted.

Dr. Paul Sandifer, Director of the Department of Natural Resources said it best when he wrote "I fervently believe that all of our citizens, our young people especially, must be educated about the critical importance of maintaining a healthy natural resource base...Even if many of the people we reach never play an active role in natural resource management, they will...make a more informed decision on natural resource issues as they are confronted with these decisions throughout life."

South Carolina's youth are not only our future decision makers; they will ultimately determine the future of our rivers. It is essential that we equip them with the knowledge, awareness of, and respect for water resources, and encourage a personal, life-long commitment of responsibility and positive community participation.

This issue of the SC River News will highlight examples of these educational efforts.

## Kids in Conservation

*Lori Battler, Natural Resource Conservation Service*

In an effort to expand community youth's knowledge of natural resource conservation and evaluation methods, the Lee Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors an annual program incorporating various environmental topics and activities for fourth to sixth grade learners. Students gather once a month at Lee State Park with a park interpreter to investigate topics such as water quality, erosion and

sedimentation, animal habitats, wetland habitats, watersheds, and river systems. In essence, these topics encompass the essential elements of an ecological system.

This year's program included many exciting, hands-on learning experiences in Lee State Park ponds and the Lynches River. Water quality in the river was assessed using various chemical and biological methods,

*Continued on page 2 .....*

# SCDHEC Water Quality Education Programs for Children

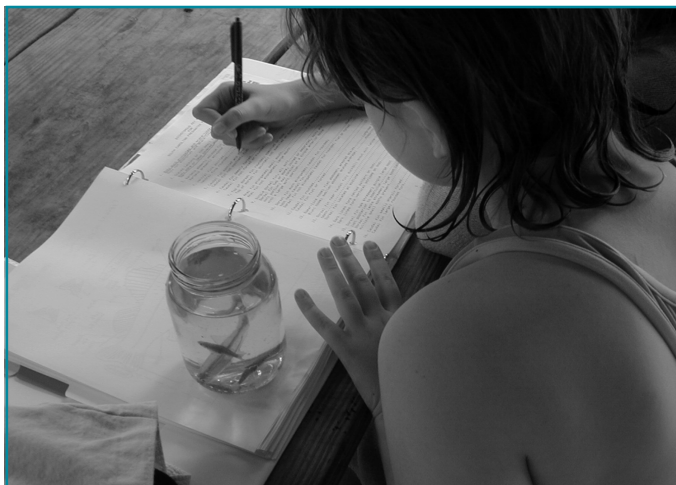
*Kim Gunler, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control*

Within the DHEC Bureau of Water, the Outreach and Education section has made a commitment to educate the children of SC about our water resources. We hope that by providing them with knowledge and allowing them to discover the beauty of our state's waterways, future generations will be able to enjoy clean water for years to come. DHEC offers several ways for children to get involved in water quality in South Carolina.

The Water Watch program is an ideal way for children to begin to affect water quality. This program encourages groups to "adopt" a local body of water, then take steps to learn about, restore and protect it. Water Watchers can be community groups, classrooms, churches, 4H clubs, Scout troops, and individual children. Of the 57 current Water Watch groups, 31 are primarily children's groups.

Initially, groups are encouraged to learn about their body of water. DHEC provides resources to assist with this in the form of maps, water quality data, speakers and other resources. The groups are encouraged to research the watershed of their

adopted area, and to find out what potential sources of pollution might be located there (both point and nonpoint sources). Instructions for conducting both a Watershed Survey and Shoreline Survey are available to help with this task. The Water Watch Coordinator also makes



*Students use a Biological Survey to assess the quality of their water*

presentations using a Terrene Watershed Model to teach about watersheds and how they work, the difference between point source and nonpoint source pollution, and the how to control nonpoint source at home. Another tool that we use to allow a group to get to know their body of water is a Biological Survey. Hundreds of children in South Carolina have been trained to collect and identify macroinvertebrates to use in assessing the quality of their water.

After the introductory knowledge gathering phase, all groups are prompted to become active in the water body's restoration and protection. Suggested activities include litter cleanups, streambank restoration and storm drain stenciling campaigns. This last activity, by far the most popular, involves groups stenciling the message "Dump No Waste, Drains To Stream" on the pavement in front of storm drains in their community. In the past two years, youth-led stenciling projects have been completed in Richland, Lexington, Beaufort and Laurens counties, and have marked a total of more than 300 drains.

Finally, all youth Water Watch groups are persuaded to let others know about their findings and activities. Posters, brochures and presentations are all ways in which a group can spread the word about water quality throughout the community. We have had a high school group produce and print brochures for distribution in their community, and scouts who have given presentations on the importance of storm drain stenciling at city council meetings.

DHEC's Bureau of Water recognizes the importance of educating today's children to make tomorrow's choices. By offering programs such as Water Watch, Champions of the Environment, 4H2O and others, we hope to shape a populace that is knowledgeable and cares about water quality...for the benefit of all of us.

## Kids in Conservation

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including use of artificial leaf packs for macroinvertebrate data. After two months anchored in the Lynches River, these leaf packs were collected and examined. Students were surprised to find leeches among the inventory. Additionally, the method of sludge dipping for comparison of various state park pond water qualities provided an opportunity for contrasting pond organisms and the added benefit of playing in the water.

The physical processes involved in water quality were also investigated. Through

examination of erosion and sedimentation, one aspect of the inter-relationship between water and the impact of human's use of resources was addressed. Specifically, various low-impact farming practices and the use of best management practices (BMPs) in timber harvesting were presented to illustrate efforts in lessening stream degradation. Furthermore, nonpoint source pollution activities provided information on how excess fertilizer can provide too many nutrients for the system and the ability of harmful compounds such as mercury to flow through the food chain and reach the dinner plate.

Kids in Conservation provided the students, through actual participation, knowledge of how their individual actions and the community can have direct impact on the watersheds and rivers. Most importantly, these water quality issues were incorporated with ecological processes to emphasize the relationships that define our ecosystem and consequently, our own life-processes. Kids in Conservation imparted environmental education through experiencing the environment.

# Hannah Boyd Wins Lynches River Festival Essay Contest

*Lynn Quattro, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources*

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lynches River Festival was held at Lee State Park near Bishopville on Saturday, May 20. The festival is an annual event coordinated by the Lynches Scenic River Advisory Council which was formed after a 54-mile stretch of the Lynches River was designated as a State Scenic River in 1994. The council is a citizens-based organization concerned with the conservation of natural resources in the Lynches River Basin. This year, to help organize the festival, the Lynches Scenic River Advisory Council collaborated with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT), and Carolina Power and Light Company. The purpose of the festival is to celebrate the outstanding resources of the Lynches River. Programs and activities are geared toward people of all ages.

This year, festival organizers held an essay contest for 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the Lynches River Watershed: *The Importance of the Lynches River in Our Community*. The purpose of this contest was to encourage children in the area to think about the significant role the Lynches River plays within the community and the ways we all affect this outstanding resource in our everyday lives. Fifth grade teachers were informed of the contest and encouraged to include their students. Each teacher was instructed to submit the best three essays from their class.

Hannah Boyd of Cades, South Carolina submitted the winning essay. Hannah attended The Carolina Academy in Lake City, South Carolina. Her teacher, Lynn Godwin, submitted Hannah's essay. Hannah will receive a \$200 savings bond for her winning entry; her teacher, Ms. Godwin, will receive a \$50 cash prize for submitting the essay.

Hannah's winning essay appears to the right.



*Kids learn about river habitat during the Lynches River Festival*



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### *Why Lynches River Is Important to Me*

*Lynches River is important for many reasons, like swimming, fishing, boating and a refuge for wildlife.*

*One of the most important things is how the river helps the crops. We are mainly an agricultural region. Farmers here raise crops such as corn, wheat, soybeans, tobacco, flowers, vegetables, and cotton. We would hope that rain would provide enough water for these crops but in our area we suffer droughts every year. So in times of drought irrigation is used. Irrigation is the process of pumping water from the river to the fields. Without Lynches River we would not be able to irrigate during a drought and our crops would die. If the vegetable crops died, there would be a shortage of food and food prices would go up. Without cotton the price of clothes would go up. If there was a shortage of tobacco, cigarette prices would go up. And if there was a shortage of flowers the prices of flowers would go up. Also the farmers who grow these crops would not have anything to sell so they would not have any money. And in turn, our local stores would suffer because nobody would be able to buy anything.*

*In our area hunting is a popular sport. Deer, ducks, squirrels, and rabbits are hunted often, providing us with food. The river provides plenty of vegetation for these animals. This makes the river popular to hunt around.*

*And finally, Lynches River is also important for the recreation it provides. People come from all over to enjoy the fishing. The river provides many types of fish such as bass, bream, and catfish. People also enjoy canoeing down Lynches River and watching the deer and other wildlife. Hiking and swimming are also fun activities to do around Lynches River.*

*We must all work together to preserve Lynches River so we will always have clean water and fun things to do.*



## River Currents

**Friends of the Edisto: First Annual Membership Meeting is set for November 18.** The public is invited to attend this event to be held at the Orangeburg Arts Center located in the City of Orangeburg's famous Edisto Gardens on the North Fork of the Edisto River. Meet with Friends to celebrate the Edisto and consider ways we can better care for one of the longest free-flowing blackwater rivers in America. A business meeting, special presentations, and a pig pickin' are scheduled from 12:30 till 7:00 PM. For more details, contact Bill Marshall at (803) 734-9096 or go the web site: [www.edistofriends.org](http://www.edistofriends.org).

**The Scenic Broad River Advisory Committee is beginning the task of re-writing and updating the Management Plan for the 15-mile scenic segment of the Broad River.** This involves studying the current conditions and issues associated with the river. The Advisory Committee members will be meeting monthly to discuss the many river related issues and then make recommendations as to how to solve these issues. A written plan will be put together in the summer of 2001.

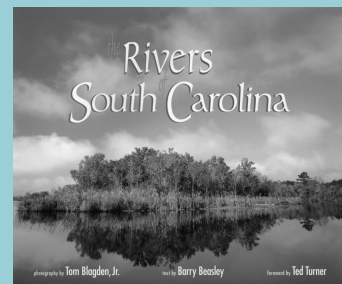
This committee along with Duke Power employees of the 99 Islands Dam participated in the Beach Sweep/River Sweep

2000 event on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. We picked up at least two truckloads of litter with the most unusual item being a stereo with speakers.

**A 75-mile segment of the Black River in Clarendon, Williamsburg and Georgetown Counties is being considered as the next South Carolina Scenic River.** The six-month study of the river has just been completed and the draft document can be retrieved from our web site at <http://water.dnr.state.sc.us>. The public process for designation is being held in October 2000. For more information call Mary Crockett at (803) 734-9111.

You can check out all this and more via the internet!

<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/river/stewardship/stewardshipindex.html>



## *the Rivers of South Carolina*

Well-known South Carolina Photographer Tom Blagden, Jr., takes you on a pictorial journey down South Carolina's waterways, capturing their beauty on film. Barry Beasley's insightful essays bring the rivers to life and help increase our awareness of the challenges involved in protecting our rivers for future generations of South Carolinians. He introduces the reader to special individuals whose devotion to rivers has created strong, grassroots conservation movements. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' River Conservation Program is proud to offer the Rivers of South Carolina. All proceeds go directly to the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Trust Fund. This fund was established in 1989 to help fund river education, conservation and management of South Carolina's Scenic Rivers. To obtain a copy of this book, please mail a check for \$44.25 (includes postage) made payable to SCDNR to our address shown on this newsletter.



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